

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

IN MY ROOMS—CONFESSION 196

Here I am in my little rooms at the hotel and they certainly look good to me. I have persuaded Dick to let the nurse go and he has fixed it so I can have everything near my bed that I may need and I can call the boy at any time.

To tell the truth, I shall be glad to be alone. The doctor can dress my burned foot, and my broken leg is getting along nicely. I do not suffer very much except when I try to move my feet. I feel I shall rather enjoy the company of Margie Waverly.

Last night Dick told me that he was dreadfully in debt and he was much worried over a lot of little bills that are pressing him.

"What's the use of worrying?" I said. "Don't you remember we almost quarreled over putting some money in the bank for just such emergencies as this? You give me those bills and I can write the letters and send the checks and you need not worry any more about them."

At first he demurred, but I told him it would be good for me to have something to do, and he was glad to get rid of it all, I could see. "Take the bills and the money. I never can keep out of debt," he said.

He also told me that the book publishing company was not making any money this year. A number of cities where they expected their books would be recommended and sold had, through the grafting efforts of some unscrupulous politicians, purchased books of another company.

"I don't believe we can sell school books on honor, Margie," said Dick, despondently. "The competition is not of merit nor salesmanship. It is who will give us the most graft."

"I would not stay in any business where I had to practice such methods," I said.

"Little you know about it, my dear. You would have to make comprom-

ises with your conscience and yourself every day if you were a successful business man. That is all there is to business—one long series of compromises."

I wonder if Dick is not right? It seems to me as though we were getting more and more to think that only by grafting or paying graft can we succeed.

We cannot even have the slightest favor done for us without some one gets the graft. We cannot go to a hotel without feeling the waiters and the bellboys. The most of us, however, do this feeling because we have to get ahead of the other guests, to get something that will not appear in the bill—something a little better than the man who is in the next room to us or who sits at the next table. We never get it, because the man in the next room and the man at the next table is doing the same thing.

Dick is also very much worried about his father, who, he says, should be in the house instead of at his business. "But dad does not dare leave the store in Jack's hands," Dick tells me. Jack has been showing some alarming tendencies of late to drink and stay out nights. Poor Mary looks like a shadow of her former self. She came over to see me yesterday, and two or three times her eyes filled with tears. She did not make any complaint, but she did say, however, that she did not know what she would do without Aunt Mary.

Jack came to see me last night with a big bunch of American Beauty roses, which I knew he could not afford, and I thought he spoke a little thickly. He seemed very nervous and, although he was profuse in his expressions of sympathy, I could see that he was only happy when he made his exit.

It doesn't look as though we were going to be a very happy family.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)